1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
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wash themselves in it. When they are a little older and stronger they have to clean the byres and kraals, assist in the milking, and herd the small calves and the sheep and goats at pasture.

FIG. 7. Mud figures of oxen decorated with tassels.

Food and play contacts with the cattle have changed to labour contacts. At this age the interests of the sexes in cattle begin to diverge and the divergence becomes more apparent as they grow up. The labour of girls and women is restricted to the byres and the kraals and is concerned mostly with the cows, while boys herd the calves at pasture, as well as assisting in the kraal,

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1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
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and after initiation they herd the adult cattle and in the kraal give their attention mainly to the oxen. The women are dairy-maids; the men herdsmen. Moreover, to a girl the cows are essentially providers of milk and cheese and they remain such when she grows up and is married and milks and churns for her husband's people, whereas to a boy they are part of the family herd in which he has property rights. They have entered the herd on the marriage of his kinswomen and one day he will marry with them. A girl is separated from the herd on marriage; a boy remains as its owner. When a boy becomes a youth and is initiated into manhood the cattle become something more than food and the cause of labour. They are also a means of display and marriage. It is only when a man marries and has children and an independent household and herd, when he has become an elder and man of position, that he often uses cattle as sacrifices, invests them with a sacred significance, and employs them in ritual.

The Nuer and his herd form a corporate community with solidarity of interests, to serve which the lives of both are adjusted, and their symbiotic relationship is one of close physical contact. The cattle are docile and readily respond to human care and guidance. No high barriers of culture divide men from beasts in their common home, but the stark nakedness of Nuer amid their cattle and the intimacy of their contact with them present a classic picture of savagery. I ask the reader to look at some of the illustrations, for example the Frontispiece and Plates III, V, and XVII, which will convey to him better than I can do in words the crudity of kraal life.

Cattle are not only an object of absorbing interest to Nuer, having great economic utility and social value, but they live in the closest possible association with them. Moreover, irrespective of use, they are in themselves a cultural end, and the mere possession of, and proximity to, them gives a man his heart's desire. On them are concentrated his immediate interests and his farthest ambitions. More than anything else they determine his daily actions and dominate his attention. We have remarked on the over-emphasis on cattle produced by their wide range of social and economic uses. So many physical, psychological, and social requirements can be satisfied from

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
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husband is alive the beasts count as part of his herd and the wives cannot dispose of them without his consent, which he can withhold. With the consent of the wife concerned, which she would find it difficult to withhold, he can dispose of them for marriages or other purposes.

A man also gives oxen to his sons so that they may display themselves in their company, but, here again, the sons do not have rights in them against their father, who can use the animals for any purpose he thinks fit, including the marriages of other sons than those to whom he has given the beasts, though he would promise a son deprived of his ox to replace it as soon as he could do so. The only cattle a father cannot, or at any rate ought not to, take for his own use without his sons' consent are those which come to them by inheritance, for these are *ghok jookni*, cattle of the ghosts. They may come through a dead mother's right, or the son may be the child of a ghost-marriage or a leviratic marriage and have a right to the herd of his pater, which should not be set aside by the man who is acting in his father's place.

The family is an economic unit. Its members, with aid in certain undertakings from kinsmen and neighbours, maintain themselves and provide for their daily needs. None of the broader departments of economy are exclusively the domain of either sex and there is often direct mutual assistance between the sexes in the performance of tasks. Also, tasks which are normally performed by one sex may be performed by the other in circumstances which render this necessary. Nevertheless, there is a clear, and complementary, division of labour between men and women. Boys' work is mostly within the sphere of men's activities, the older boys performing many adult tasks, and, except for milking, they take no part in labour which is never done by men. Girls have the same duties as women, to the extent their age permits.

Most of the labour connected with the flocks and herds falls to the men and boys. The work of gardens is shared equally between men and women, sons assisting their mothers and the husband his wives. Only men hunt, and they and the boys do by far the greater part of the fishing. Women collect wild fruits and roots. Men do most of the building and repair of byres and huts, though women do some of the lighter tasks in these activities. Most of the daily tasks of the home, especially the preparation of food by churning, pounding, grinding, cooking, and brewing, are the

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
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462 exclusive privilege of women. Men manufacture most of the weapons and ornaments they use for themselves and for the cattle, and women the utensils and ornaments they use.

In general it may be said that men take on themselves a fair share of the labour of the home, that the routine work of the homestead is chiefly in the hands of women and a man's work very largely in the bush, and that tasks requiring greater strength are done by men. Division of labour between age-grades is also equitable.

594 A Nuer home is run by the combined efforts of all its members and the labour of running it is fairly distributed among them. One cannot but be struck by the camaraderie of the family as they assist one another in daily and seasonal tasks, either by direct aid or by co-ordination of activities. No work is considered degrading, no one is a drudge, all have leisure for rest and recreation, and all are content with their roles in the economy of the home. Indeed, the division of labour between sexes and ages accords with the social and personal freedom of women and children in Nuerland and with the recognition, so striking among the Nuer, of the independence and dignity of the individual.

462 I have omitted details in this brief account of division of labour, but there is one to which attention must be drawn. No man may milk the cows. This can only be done by women and uninitiated boys, and boys do not generally milk if there are women in the home. Woman's exclusive role of milkmaid combined with her roles of dairymaid and cook make her the centre of family and household. However many cattle a man may possess, he is helpless without a wife or mother or sister to milk the cows. It is only through marriage that a man can have a home of his own, and one of the most serious consequences of divorce is that it compels him to attach himself to the home of a kinsman whose womenfolk can milk and cook for him. Hence, also, if a man dies leaving motherless unmarried sons, efforts are made for the eldest of them to be married as soon as possible so that the others may group themselves around him, or rather round his wife, who cooks and milks for them all. Otherwise the brothers may scatter to the homes of their married sisters, of their mothers' brothers, or of some other kinsmen. Even after men are married and have homes of their own there are many occasions when they have to rely on the wives of brothers or of other neighbours and kinsmen for the

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milking of their cows. Nuer group themselves round a herd, and the rule prohibiting men from milking means that in grouping themselves around a herd they also group themselves around the milkmaid who serves the herd. This central position a wife has in Nuer economy, like the central position she has as a mother in the lineage, to which I have earlier referred, enhances her status in society. Here again also her position in this respect as in the other tends to break down narrow family exclusiveness and to draw closer to her husband his brothers and close paternal kin.

The family produces most of what it needs, and most of what it produces it consumes. Nevertheless, some tasks cannot be performed, and others are often not performed, by the ordinary family without assistance from kith and kin; and there is much sharing among neighbours. Most hunting, and much of the fishing, require more participants than the family can muster, and unless families take it in turn to herd, a single family would find it difficult or impossible, especially in dry-season camps, to look after its cattle, calves, sheep, and goats, as well as to attend to the children and the tasks of kraal and kitchen. Help in activities requiring co-operation, as well as in milking when that is required, is given by close neighbours who are also kinsmen. Also, there are other tasks which, though they might be accomplished by the family unaided, are often, but by no means always, performed by co-operative parties of neighbours: clearing gardens, making drainage trenches, dams, and seed-beds in swampy ground, weeding, harvesting, threshing, and building. The helpers are given beer or porridge or both. Thus Nuer say of building a byre: 'We Nuer cut the supports with beer, we cut the grass with beer, we build the walls with beer, and we erect the supports with porridge.' Although a family probably spends as much labour in helping other people as would, had it been expended in their own home and gardens, have enabled them to be self-sufficient in maintaining them, it is much more pleasantly spent when distributed in this way. Not only is a family relieved of the necessity of tackling particularly laborious jobs unaided, but when the work is done by mutual aid it becomes something of a game, losing its monotony in merry company and in the feelings of good-neighbourliness it engenders; for the beer and porridge are not payment for work done but hospitality provided for friends and kin, who accept the invitation to take part in the work because they are friends and

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
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cleans it out, and rearranges the grass coil around the sides. The discoloured water is then drawn out in gourdfuls and thrown away. They continue drawing the water till they are satisfied that the well is clean again. Every day the walls of the trough receive a fresh coating of sand and are thus kept smooth and clean. All the work falls to the men and boys. Men, assisted by the bigger boys, dig the wells and make the troughs and draw the water. The smaller boys guard the water. Women and girls only draw water for household purposes. 312 312 462

There were dozens of wells at Yik, the bed of the river having been bored every few yards. As each well supplied two or three troughs the ground was covered with shiny pools. 312

X.

Water is the primary problem of the herdsman's life in Nuerland. A secondary problem, for it arises from excess or insufficiency of water, is pasturage. In their seasonal movements Nuer are not only seeking water but also nourishing grasses and when herdsmen take the cattle from camp to their grazing grounds they do not guide them haphazardly across the plain but drive them to where they know of succulent grasses. The best pastures are often far from camp and the cattle have to be milked early so that they may have time to graze, drink water, chew the cud, and graze again before returning to camp. It is necessary to herd the cattle in the dry season, but Nuer say that it is better to do so at all times of the year though they do not always act accordingly. When I brought one of my cows from Yakwac to Mancom early in the rains it was noticeably thinner than the Mancom cattle. The Mancom people said that the Yakwac cattle do not do so well as their own because the Yakwac people do not herd their cattle in the rains and take them to the best pastures but leave them to graze by themselves. Consequently they graze on the exhausted pasturage near the homesteads. At Mancom a man always accompanied the cattle and took them to the richest grasses. 233

Nuer are great authorities on grasses and know all about their habits and distributions. They never make a mistake in identifying 824 233

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
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361 or dearth of pasturage, the people remain on their village sites or move only a short distance from them, they insist on making a camp nearby, for such is the ancient dry-season custom.

342 The windscreen (*geaw*) does not seem to be used in Western Nuerland. In the camps I have seen there both sexes live in grass huts plastered with dung, the huts of married couples being rather larger than those occupied by youths or girls. The huts appear also to be more carefully constructed than in Eastern Nuerland. In
343 Nuer camps one sometimes sees a rough shelter (*geaw dorni*) constructed of branches with grass, often the riverside *buor*, thrown on top to give shade for the young calves during the heat of the day. Otherwise they are taken into the huts or tethered beneath a tree.

233 In the front of the windscreens are tethered the cattle. When they are grazing the kraal is a circle studded with pegs and sprinkled with drying dung. When they come back in the evening they are tethered to these pegs. Adult cattle are placed in the centre of the kraal, the calves on the outside nearest to the windscreens where they are under the watchful eyes of their owners, and the sheep and goats in small clusters here and there between the adult cattle and the calves. Oxen of enormous size, with great spreading horns trained into artificial shapes, stand docile and lethargic, prominent among the other cattle. A man places his favourite ox in a line with the entrance to his windscreen so that he can see it without moving.

234 Before and during milking youths display themselves in company
883 with their favourite oxen. Boys lead the oxen round the camp and their young owners walk behind them brandishing their spears and leaping gracefully into the air, shouting and singing the while. This display is called *raw* and is one of the customs of dry season camps. It is not practised in wet season villages because a youth does not show off before his own family but when he has a large audience, including girls whose favours he wishes to win. Youths often continue to display themselves till the cattle are driven to pasture.

234 Milking starts between 6-30 and 7-00. If the morning is misty
462 it may be delayed till slightly later. As men are forbidden to milk

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
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they sit in their windscreens while the women and boys milk the cows. This task takes about half an hour and the cattle then remain for a while tethered to their pegs. Each household milks its own cows and if there are strong boys and girls they do most of the work, leaving the married women to cook and attend to their babies, but adult women milk troublesome cows which require experience and firm handling and if they have no adolescent sons and daughters have to milk all the cows of their household. 234 463 512

Between 7-30 and 8-0 the cattle are taken to pasture. If some of the beasts are loosened before milking is finished they do not leave the herd but wait nearby the kraal till they are driven out with the herd. By this time the sun is high in the heavens. When there is good pasturage near the camp they may not be loosened till 9-0—10-0 o'clock because they will have plenty of time to eat their fill before sunset. Mr. Corfield tells me that they are generally taken to pasture at this late hour among the Eastern Jikany whose country is not so arid as that of the Lou. I gathered from statements of Western Nuer that in their country it is customary for the cattle to be loosened even later in the day. 233 512

No one gives an order for the cattle to be loosened but when all the cows have been milked someone begins to loosen his cattle and the others follow suit, the oxen being loosened last. The herdsmen for the day take them out of the kraal. Usually several men accompany the cattle for a short distance but some of these return to camp and only two or three men spend the day with them in the grazing grounds. Each household in turn provides a herdsman and the men who herded the cattle today arrange with others to herd them tomorrow. The adult occupants of each windscreen must take their turns as herdsmen. After being loosened, some beasts make at once for nearby water while others wait till they have reached their grazing grounds and drink there, for, about midday, the herdsmen accompany them to a pool. If water is near the cattle make their way to it, but if it is distant they have to be driven there. Herding is considered a hardship and is conducted by young adults. They have to keep a close watch over the cattle during the heat of the day in case they wander and

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
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233 512 [533] they may have to defend them against carnivorous beasts and human raiders. Often they relieve the monotony and solitude by composing and chanting songs. Nuer say that most songs are invented in the grazing grounds. Herdsmen have a quick meal before leaving camp [264] and, except when there are plenty of *keglig* fruits in the early part of the dry season, they will not have another bite till after sunset. However hungry he might feel no herdsman would milk a cow.

512 462 234 237 After the cattle have left camp the day is closed for the men, as far as routine cattle tasks are concerned, till they are brought back to the kraal in the evening; but women and boys continue their labours. Women milk the goats and sheep and prepare the morning meal. Boys spread out the cattle dung that has collected overnight so that it may dry in the sun and furnish fuel to replenish the household fires at night. They also smooth the part of the kraal occupied by their beasts by rubbing over the earth the nightly residue of ashes, urine, and dung. Boys assist in milking the goats and in taking the small calves to shade. They then take the larger calves and the [233] flocks to pasture. Older boys herd the calves and younger boys look after the flocks in the vicinity of the kraal. They spend most of the day playing games. If a small boy is hungry he catches a she-goat [857] and milks it, holding it by the horns with one hand while he puts its udder and squeezes its teats with the other hand from which he then licks the milk. Or he may suckle it. People do not object to small boys milking the goats they are herding. They are small and hungry and need all the food they can get to grow into strong men.

512 462 224 Not all the adult men have been idle while their womenfolk and the boys have been cleaning the kraal and milking. On most mornings parties of two and three leave camp at dawn with their dogs to pick up a gazelle or other small animal. They do not return to camp till after milking is finished, and those who set out at dawn to inspect their giraffe traps return about the same time. After the cattle have been loosened the men potter about for a couple of hours. Generally some of them are engaged in making utensils and ornaments or in dressing their hair.

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
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Much attention is devoted to hair-dressing in the dry season. In the rains the hair is sometimes neglected though never for a long time unless a man is in mourning. Nuer hair is naturally crinkly and black but when treated with ashes of cattle dung mixed with wood ash it is oxidised and becomes straight and golden. A man takes a heap of ash from his wind-screen fire, mixes it with wood ash, and places them on his sleeping skin where he removes any lumps, leaving only fine ash. To make the ashes finer still he beats them with a mallet and shakes and taps the skin so that the ashes are spread over it and can be searched for foreign matter which is then extracted. When he is satisfied he divides the ashes into two heaps, one of which he mixes with water. The Eastern Nuer do not use urine for this purpose as the Dinka and, to a lesser extent, the Western Nuer do. The scalp is now massaged with the damp ashes. When this is finished the hair is gathered into a peak at the back or front of the head and the dry ashes are sprinkled on top. The head remains for two or three days in its ash plaster which is then removed and the hair is sprinkled with oil. Nuer hair freshly treated in this way has a golden tint and glistens in the sun. Young men spend many hours in their wind-screens, after the cattle have gone to pasture, preparing their hair in this way.

By about 10 o'clock most of the men are sleeping behind their windscreens, beneath trees, or, if the camp is near a wet season village, in byres. Only if game is sighted is there any male activity in the camp for an hour or two before noontide. The men grasp their spears and with their dogs sprint after the animal to encircle it and run it down. After the first rains all able-bodied men leave camp to search for giraffe-tracks and if they find the animals they pursue them till they are exhausted and overtaken and speared. Nuer sometimes chase giraffe all day long and their endurance will scarcely be believed till it is seen, being especially remarkable when we recollect that they are weakened by hunger at this time of the year. But at the height of the dry season it is useless to hunt giraffe as they are too fleet on hard ground. While the men are sleeping the women are engaged in churning last night's milk.

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
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512 726 883 About noon youths and maidens bathe in the river wherever a shallow sandy stretch offers a clear playground. They do the same at inland lakes but much time is there given also to fishing. The young people sit and splash in the water and the sexes flirt and wrestle in and out of the water. At about 2.30 they return to the camp where the girls churn the morning milk and pound and grind millet for the evening meal. The men turn over the drying dung with their sticks and then, having nothing more they need attend to, most of them return to their windscreens though one or two youths may try and spear fish in the shallows and they are joined there by older boys who are not herding the calves.

512 233 237 372 About 4.30 p.m. the small calves are brought from the shade where they have spent the day and are tethered in the kraal. The men hold them between their legs and lifting up their heads compel them to swallow water. At this time the boys bring back the larger calves and goats and sheep from grazing. Members of each household tether their animals. Generally one or two men now go out to meet (jaar) the returning herd. Others gather the dried dung on hides from the heaps into which boys have swept it, and each owner of a windscreen makes up the evening fire on his hearth. There is no need to light the fires as they have been smouldering all day long and it is only necessary to clear away surface ashes and heap the new fuel on the exposed embers. Dense clouds of smoke arise and envelope the camp.

512 233 462 264 By 5 o'clock cows which have recently calved come running home and herald the approach of the herd which appears from 15 to 30 minutes later. Adult men tether the cattle of their household and women and boys commence at once to milk the cows and they finish this work before sunset. The women then prepare the evening meal and finish their dairy work. The men sit in their windscreens and await the meal which is served between 7 and 8 p.m. Nuer eat twice a day: in the morning and in the evening. The evening meal consists of millet porridge, with cheese or butter, or both, poured over it. The morning meal is generally the remains of supper heated up or with hot milk poured over it.

8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

4. TRADE AND LOANS

Trade has never been extensive among the Nuer. There is, of course, a division of labour according to sex, but there are few people who can be accounted specialist craftsmen. Individuals acquire the reputation for making certain specific objects with exceptional skill, but they rarely if ever belong to a family especially associated with such activities. This is an exceptional contrast to specialization in the spiritual sphere, for there are hereditary experts capable of dealing with almost any unusual phenomena: ritual experts, magicians, sooth-sayers and medicine-owners, who demand fees, often in cattle, for their services.

The reason lies, perhaps, in the extraordinary simplicity of Nuer material culture. Most things necessary for their migratory way of life (and this applies to all peoples who move with the seasons) can be made either from wood or grass or from the products of their cattle. Seasonal migration in any case precludes a high degree of virtuosity, for things are liable to breakage and are often an unnecessary encumbrance. Moreover the Nuer, who do not use their animals for transport, must carry everything by hand.

Certain objects were of relatively high value, and were exchanged for cattle or sheep and goats. Nowadays, however, most of these articles—hoes, spears, ornaments and the like—can be obtained for cash, and disputes do not often arise in the courts except over the sale of grain.

Trade in Cattle

Trade in cattle is clearly increasing as a cash economy becomes more important to the Nuer but, as yet, cattle are rarely sold except when the purchase of grain is necessary. A significant paragraph from the Jonglei Investigation Team's *Third Interim Report* (1948) is worth quoting, for the figures given, although taken from all Nilotic inhabitants of the Upper Nile Province, include all the Nuer:

> The disposal of surplus livestock is governed by private, family, and tribal circumstances, and is at present tied up with the need to find cash; this is required mainly for the purchase of grain and veterinary vaccines and, to a small extent, for the payment of taxes. There are four channels through which the inhabitants can dispose of their animals:
>
> (*a*) By sale to the Veterinary Laboratory at Malakal, where they will be used to produce cattle-plague vaccine and serum.
>
> (*b*) By sale to Malakal butchers for local consumption.
>
> (*c*) By export to Equatoria Province, in which case most of them will be butchered in Juba.
>
> (*d*) By export northwards to the markets of Kosti and Omdurman.
>
> In the majority of cases all trade is carried out through merchants as intermediaries. . . . Previously it had often been necessary for the District Commissioner concerned to exercise pressure before the local inhabitants could be induced to sell.

9:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1936 FJ22 Nuer FJ22

warfare because they would certainly be killed if they did and the same applies to old men. Nevertheless a good number of the older men who are more active than fellow-members of their age-set will accompany expeditions. Moreover, war is organised by tribal sections based on locality and communal sentiment and not by the age-set system. The whole of a district or a tribe is summoned to take part in a feud or in a raid on the Dinka, and anyone will accompany the expedition who wishes to do so. They do not call up certain age-sets and leave others at home. During the actual fighting, while it is natural that people of roughly the same age will fight side by side, there is nothing compulsive about this arrangement and men of all ages fight together as a section. Thus when two sections unite for warfare we shall find the men of each section fighting with their section and not with their age-set. In the same way a man is not expected to fight only warriors of his own age-set but will engage with whomsoever he finds opposite to him. Hence we may say that the Nuer age-sets are not regiments, and indeed have no specific military functions, but that since age and the ability to bear arms are necessarily related it happens that active warriors are recruited from certain age-sets. On the other hand the social and economic relations of the age-set system are outstanding and it is in them rather than in its ritual that we must look for its significance.

In its economic relations Nuer social life comprises three groups of persons—the women, the men, and the boys. The productive labour of women differs in many respects from that of men but the most prominent distinction between their activities is in milking the cattle. A man may not milk the cows. This is not simply a customary division of labour, as in cooking for example, but is a ritual prohibition or taboo. Were a man to milk a cow all sorts of misfortunes would follow, in particular the death of the cow. The restriction of milking to women has far-reaching effects on their position in Nuer society. But in this respect boys are classed with the women, for they are allowed to milk the cows until they have been initiated into manhood. Consequently initiation means that a boy ceases to milk; he severs his association with women's work; he becomes a man in the sense that he joins the men's group as distinct from the women's group in social life.

If cessation from milking is the most outstanding change in a boy's occupations after initiation it is by no means the only one, for his whole